

IN THE CLAIMS

Please amend the claims as follows:

Claim 1 (Currently Amended): A link manager comprising:

detecting means for detecting a link installation;

managing means for defining a plurality of link metrics, each link metric being defined by a plurality of indicating characteristics of each said link detected, and managing data corresponding to said respective link metrics on a table;

link metric rank assigning means for assigning ranks to said respective link metrics, based on a predetermined preference;

data rank assigning means for assigning ranks to each of said plurality of characteristics defining each of the data corresponding to said respective link metrics; and

selecting means for selecting a link by analyzing each link based on each individual stored metric in order of rank, and selecting a link corresponding to a record having a characteristic data with a highest rank thus assigned, at a link metric with a highest rank;

~~wherein said selecting means selects a link corresponding to a record having data with a highest rank thus assigned, at a link metric with a next highest rank, when there exists a plurality of records having data with the highest rank thus assigned.~~

Claim 2 (Original): The link manager according to Claim 1, wherein

said managing means generates a record comprised of the data corresponding to said respective link metrics, for each link on said table.

Claim 3 (Currently Amended): The link manager according to Claim 2, wherein

~~when a new link corresponding to neither said record is detected~~, said managing means generates a record corresponding to a said new link and records data corresponding to link metrics of said link when a new link corresponding to neither said record is detected and ~~wherein said managing means deletes said record~~ when a link corresponding to either said record becomes undetectable, ~~said managing means deletes said record~~.

Claims 4-5 (Canceled).

Claim 6 (Currently Amended): A link management method comprising:

~~a detecting step of~~ detecting a link installation;

~~a managing step of~~ defining a plurality of link metrics, each link metric being defined by a plurality of indicating characteristics of each said link detected and managing data corresponding to said respective link metrics on a table;

~~a step of~~ assigning ranks to said respective link metrics, based on a predetermined preference;

~~a step of~~ assigning ranks to each of said plurality of characteristics defining each of the data corresponding to said respective link metrics; and

~~a selecting step of~~ selecting a link by analyzing each link based on each individual stored metric in order of rank, and selecting a link corresponding to a record having a characteristic data with a highest rank thus assigned, at a link metric with a highest rank;

~~wherein said selecting step comprises a step of selecting a link corresponding to a record having data with a highest rank thus assigned, at a link metric with the next highest rank, when there exists a plurality of records having data with the highest rank thus assigned.~~

Claim 7 (Currently Amended): The link management method according to Claim 6,
further comprising: which comprises

~~a step of~~ generating a record comprised of the data corresponding to said respective
link metrics, for each link on said table.

Claim 8 (Currently Amended): The link management method according to Claim 7,
further comprising: which comprises a step wherein

~~when a new link corresponding to neither said record is detected;~~ generating a record
corresponding to a said new link is generated and recording data corresponding to link
metrics of said link when a new link corresponding to neither said record is detected; and

is recorded deleting said record and wherein when a link corresponding to either said
record becomes undetectable, ~~said record is deleted.~~

Claims 9-10 (Canceled).

Claim 11 (Currently Amended): A computer program product including a computer-
readable memory with a computer program code mechanism stored therein, which when
executed by a computer causes the computer to perform a method of link management,
comprising ~~steps of:~~

detecting a link installation;

defining a plurality of link metrics, each link metric being defined by a plurality of
~~indicating~~ characteristics of each said link detected and managing data corresponding to said
respective link metrics on a table;

~~a process of~~ generating a record comprised of the data corresponding to said
respective link metrics, for each link on said table;

assigning ranks to said respective link metrics, based on a predetermined preference;

assigning ranks to each of said plurality of characteristics defining the data
~~corresponding to~~ said respective link metrics; ~~and~~

when said predetermined preference is given, analyzing each link based on each
individual metric in the ranking order of the respective metrics and selecting a link
corresponding to a record having a characteristic data with a highest rank thus assigned, at a
link metric with a highest rank, ~~and~~

~~selecting a link corresponding to a record having data with a highest rank thus~~
~~assigned, at a link metric with a next highest rank, when there exist a plurality of records~~
~~having data with the highest rank thus assigned.~~

Claim 12 (Canceled).

Claim 13 (Currently Amended): The computer program product according to Claim
11, ~~which comprises a process wherein~~ further comprising:

generating ~~when a new link corresponding to neither said record is detected,~~ a record
corresponding to a said new link is generated and recording data corresponding to link
metrics of said link when a new link corresponding to neither said record is detected; and is
~~recorded and wherein~~

deleting said record when a link corresponding to either said record becomes
undetectable, ~~said record is deleted.~~

Claim 14 (Canceled).

Claim 15 (Currently Amended): A link manager comprising:

detecting means for detecting a link installation;

managing means for defining a plurality of constant link metrics and variable link metrics, each ~~indicating~~ constant and variable link metric being defined by a plurality of characteristics of each said link detected and managing data corresponding to said respective link metrics on a table, said managing means monitoring the variable link metrics which vary over time;

link metric rank assigning means for assigning ranks to said constant and variable link metrics, and assigning ranks to each of said plurality of characteristics defining each of said constant and variable link metrics; and

selecting means for selecting a link by analyzing each link based on each individual stored constant and variable link metric in order of rank, and selecting a link corresponding to a record having a characteristic data with a highest rank thus assigned, at a constant or variable link metric with a highest rank;

~~wherein said selecting means selects a link corresponding to a record having data with a highest rank thus assigned, at a constant or variable link metric with a next highest rank, when there exists a plurality of records having data with the highest rank thus assigned.~~

Claim 16 (Previously Presented): The link manager according to Claim 15, wherein

said managing means generates a record comprised of the data corresponding to said respective constant and variable link metrics, for each link on said table.

Claim 17 (Currently Amended): The link manager according to Claim 16, wherein ~~when a new link corresponding to neither said record is detected~~, said managing means generates a record corresponding to a said new link and records data corresponding to constant and variable link metrics of said link when a new link corresponding to neither said record is detected; and ~~wherein~~

said managing means deletes said record when a link corresponding to either said record becomes undetectable, ~~said managing means deletes said record~~.

Claims 18-19 (Canceled).

Claim 20 (Currently Amended): A link management method comprising:

~~a detecting step of detecting a link installation;~~

~~a managing step of defining a plurality of constant link metrics and variable link metrics, each indicating~~ constant and variable link metric being defined by a plurality of characteristics of each said link detected and managing data corresponding to said respective link metrics on a table, ~~said managing means monitoring the variable link metrics which vary over time;~~

assigning ranks to said constant and variable link metrics;

assigning ranks to each of said plurality of characteristics defining each of said
constant and variable link metrics; and

a selecting step of selecting a link by analyzing each link based on each individual stored constant and variable metric in order of rank, and selecting a link corresponding to a record having a characteristic data with a highest rank thus assigned, at a constant or variable link metric with a highest rank;

~~wherein said selecting step comprises a step of selecting a link corresponding to a record having data with a highest rank thus assigned, at a constant or variable link metric with the next highest rank, when there exists a plurality of records having data with the highest rank thus assigned.~~

Claim 21 (Currently Amended): The link management method according to Claim 20, further comprising: ~~which comprises~~

~~a step of~~ generating a record comprised of the data corresponding to said respective constant and variable link metrics, for each link on said table.

Claim 22 (Currently Amended): The link management method according to Claim 21, further comprising: ~~which comprises a step wherein~~

generating ~~when a new link corresponding to neither said record is detected,~~ a record corresponding to a said new link is generated and recording data corresponding to constant and variable link metrics of said link when a new link corresponding to neither said record is detected; ~~is recorded and~~

~~wherein~~ deleting said record when a link corresponding to either said record becomes undetectable, ~~said record is deleted.~~

Claims 23-24 (Canceled).

Claim 25 (Currently Amended): A computer program product including a computer-readable memory with a computer program code mechanism stored therein, which when

executed by a computer causes the computer to perform a method of link management, comprising ~~steps of~~:

detecting a link installation;

defining a plurality of constant link metric and variable link metrics, each ~~indicating~~ constant and variable link metric being defined by a plurality of characteristics of each said link detected and managing data corresponding to said respective link metrics on a table, ~~and~~ ~~monitoring the variable link metrics which vary over time~~;

~~a process of~~ generating a record comprised of the data corresponding to said respective constant and variable link metrics, for each link on said table;

assigning ranks to said respective link metrics, based on a predetermined preference;

assigning ranks to each of the plurality of characteristics ~~the data~~ corresponding to said respective constant and variable link metrics; and

~~when said predetermined preference is given~~, analyzing each link based on each individual metric in the ranking order of the respective constant and variable metrics and selecting a link corresponding to a record having a characteristic data with a highest rank thus assigned, at a constant or variable link metric with a highest rank, ~~and~~

~~selecting a link corresponding to a record having data with a highest rank thus assigned, at a constant or variable link metric with a next highest rank, when there exist a plurality of records having data with the highest rank thus assigned.~~

Claim 26 (Canceled).

Claim 27 (Currently Amended): The computer program product according to Claim 25, further comprising: ~~which comprises a process wherein~~

~~generating when a new link corresponding to neither said record is detected,~~ a record corresponding to ~~a said new link is generated~~ and recording data corresponding to constant and variable link metrics of said link ~~is recorded~~ when a new link corresponding to neither said record is detected; and

~~wherein deleting said record~~ when a link corresponding to either said record becomes undetectable, ~~said record is deleted.~~

Claim 28 (Canceled)

Claim 29 (Currently Amended): A link manager comprising:

a detector configured to detect a link installation;

a processor configured to define a plurality of constant link metrics and variable link metrics, each ~~indicating~~ constant and variable link metric being defined by a plurality of characteristics of each said link detected and managing data corresponding to said respective link metrics on a table, ~~said managing means monitoring the variable link metrics which vary over time;~~

a processor configured to assign ranks to said constant and variable link metrics, and assigning ranks to each of said plurality of characteristics defining each of said constant and variable link metrics; and

a processor configured to select a link by analyzing each link based on each individual stored constant and variable link metric in order of rank, and selecting a link corresponding to a record having a characteristic data with a highest rank thus assigned, at a constant or variable link metric with a highest rank;

~~wherein processor is configured to select a link corresponding to a record having data with a highest rank thus assigned, at a link metric with a next highest rank, when there exists a plurality of records having data with the highest rank thus assigned.~~

Claim 30 (New): A link manager comprising:

a detector configured to detect a link installation;

a processor configured to define a plurality of link metrics, each link metric being defined by a plurality of characteristics of each detected link;

an interface configured to receive an input to rank said respective link metrics and receive an input to rank each of said plurality of characteristics defining each of said respective link metrics; and

a processor configured to select a link by analyzing each link based on each individual stored metric in order of rank, and select a link corresponding to a record having a characteristic with a highest rank thus assigned, at a link metric with a highest rank.